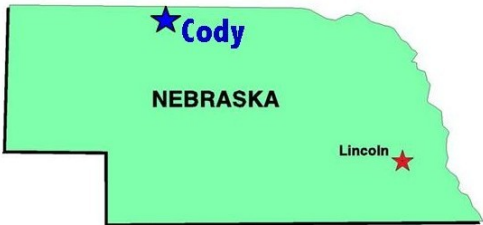


News to Educate, Engage, and Empower Entrepreneurs

YOUNG ENTREPRENEURS LAUNCH STORE

Armed with a federal grant and a dose of enthusiasm, a group of high school students plans to open a collection of businesses in a small Sand Hills town that touts itself as “too tough to die.”



The hallmark business in Cody, Neb., population 149, will be a grocery store, which hasn’t existed in the remote ranching community in almost a decade. Right now, the closest supermarket is 37 miles away, down winding U.S. Highway 20 in Valentine.

The business incubator project grew out of discussions about how to attract more young families to the community, and thus increase enrollment at the Cody-Kilgore school.

But the project’s larger benefit will be teaching entrepreneurial skills to the students, such as writing and executing business plans, marketing and retailing, according to Stacey Adamson, a teacher who is on the store steering committee.

“This will be real-life learning for the kids,” Adamson said. “Because we’re a very remote, rural community, there’s not an opportunity to work in a store.”

Entrepreneurship is a buzzword in education these days, she said, especially in rural areas, where jobs created by local entrepreneurs are viewed as a key in stemming population decline.

The Nebraska Department of Education and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, as well as the Center for Rural Affairs, are providing assistance in Cody through their entrepreneur programs.

The students plan to have a small market open by spring, with a couple of side businesses there as well. One student plans to sell farm-fresh eggs and another, espressos and smoothies.



Village of Cody Mayor Randy Schneider, signs the RBEG grant in the presence of USDA representatives.

“I know we have no room for failure. This is going to be a success,” said Chelsea Fullerton, a 17year-old senior at Cody-Kilgore High School and member of the steering committee. She wrote a business plan for a grocery store in Cody four years ago as an FFA project.

(Continued on page 2)

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We’re on the web!

www.nde.state.ne.us/entrepd/



YOUTH ENTREPRENEURS LAUNCH STORE

(Continued from page 1)



The idea was patterned after a grocery store started by students in another Sand Hills town, Arthur, nine years ago. The Wolf Den Market there now employs two workers and has moved to a new building that is nearly twice the size of the original location, an old house.

The Cody project recently received a \$75,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Development program. Community members have pledged \$10,000 in money and work to help fashion a store inside a local gas station, Cody Oil.

A full-time manager will be required to run the business, which will be staffed by students when they aren't in class.

Among those working with the project is Joy Marshall, who helped start the Arthur grocery store. She now works for the Center for Rural Affairs, which wrote the grant for Cody.

But how realistic is a grocery store in such a small, remote town? Adamson said she thinks it can work.

The last grocery store died, in part, because it didn't have enough sales to qualify for deliveries from a grocery wholesaler. Adamson said the new store will be working through Scotty's Ranchland Foods in Valentine to obtain products.

As a student-run business with equipment purchases via grants and donations, there won't be the pressure to turn a profit and service a large debt, she said.

"If we can pay a manager and break even, we'll be happy," Adamson said. "This is an educational experience."

Contact the writer, Paul Hammel at 402.473.9584, paul.hammel@owh.com

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STATEWIDE BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION



The Lincoln Chamber of Commerce and Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development are partnering with Invest

Nebraska to hold the first ever "East 2 West - The Nebraska New Venture Competition".

The competition will be held Dec. 11 and is open to the public. Entrepreneurs and business owners will have the opportunity to submit full business plans for new ventures, or significant new market business expansions, and compete for an estimated \$50,000.

Business plan submissions will be accepted from any Nebraska resident or one that intends to start/locate the business in Nebraska. Prize money can be used to purchase equipment, inventory or begin business operations.

The new business plan competition is a revamped version of a statewide competition started by the Partnership in 2006. The Partnership and State of Nebraska Economic Development Department postponed the event after two years to develop a new format through Invest Nebraska.

Further details on this year's business plan event will be available soon. Updates will be posted on the competition website located at: www.NEbusinessplancompetition.com when available. Inquiries can be directed to Jason Ball - Director of Business Development, 402.436.2374 or jball@lcoc.com



Source: NBDC-Lincoln Newsletter, Publication 7, September, 2009

MANY TEENS WANT TO LIVE IN THEIR HOMETOWN AND PURSUE ENTREPRENEURSHIP CAREERS



To date, a total of 6,059 junior high and high school students from 39 communities in Nebraska, Kansas and Missouri have participated in a teen survey process to measure their perceptions about their community, education and

career plans, and their desire to live in their hometown area in the future. The surveys were funded through Hometown Competitiveness (HTC), Kansas Hometown Prosperity, and the Connie Fund in partnership with the Nebraska Community Foundation.

The significant number of young people interested in living in their hometown area in the future creates tangible opportunities for reversing historical out-migration patterns and revitalizing local economies. Realizing these opportunities, however, requires vision with action—investing time and resources into youth priorities and making communities more attractive options for young people to live in and work.

More information on the survey results and community-focused strategies for effective youth engagement are available by contacting:

Craig Schroeder, Senior Fellow
Center for Rural Entrepreneurship
402.423.8788
craigs@neb.rr.com

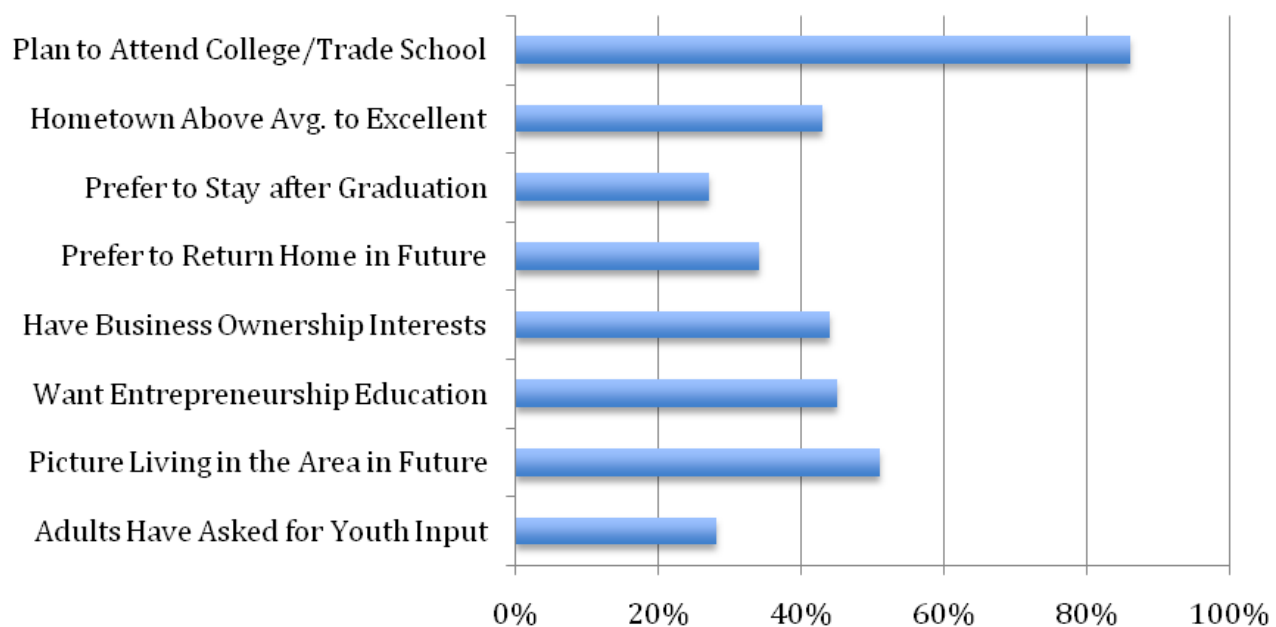
rupri Center for **RURAL**
ENTREPRENEURSHIP

HTC is a comprehensive approach to long-term rural community sustainability. This approach goes beyond the traditional tunnel vision of economic development. HTC helps the community to focus on four interrelated strategies that depend on each other for ultimate success. The four strategic areas of HTC are:

- ❖ Building Local Leadership
- ❖ Expanding Community Philanthropy
- ❖ Energizing Entrepreneurship
- ❖ Engaging Youth and Young People

Teen Survey Highlights

N=6,059



RUPRI CENTER FOR RURAL ENTREPRENEURSHIP TO OFFER BUSINESS COACHING TO COMMUNITIES



The RUPRI Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, www.energizingentrepreneurs.org, has developed a Business Coaching strategy as an outgrowth of the HomeTown Competitiveness (HTC) model pioneered by the Nebraska Community Foundation, the Heartland Center for Leadership Development, and the RUPRI Center.

With new funding from the U.S. Small Business Administration and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the RUPRI Center has an opportunity to bring the Business Coaching strategy to a limited number of communities in Nebraska over the next year. The Center is looking for communities in Nebraska that are interested in exploring this strategy and are already committed to entrepreneurship as part of their development strategy. Grants will be available to provide technical assistance in support of the Business Coaching strategy, but require a \$1 for \$1 match from the community.

Communities must meet the following criteria to be considered for this opportunity:

- ❖ Communities must be ready to commit to Business Coaching by December 15, 2009.
- ❖ Communities must be able to demonstrate a match for technical assistance grants of up to \$15,000.
- ❖ Priority will be given to rural communities in Nebraska, but larger trade center communities will be considered.
- ❖ Since there are a limited number of grants available, preference will be given first to communities that are existing HTC Nebraska partner communities, second to communities affiliated with the Nebraska Community Foundation, and third to all other Nebraska communities.

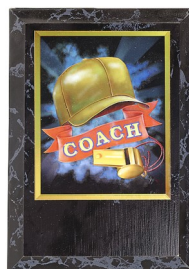
Detailed Request for Interest

Those who are seriously interested in exploring the Business Coaching strategy as an economic development opportunity are invited to send the following to Don Macke, RUPRI Center for Rural

Entrepreneurship, Director of Practitioner Programs at don@e2mail.org:

- ❖ Contact name and information.
- ❖ Community and/or communities interested.
- ❖ A short statement on why your community is interested in this opportunity, including background on your community's current entrepreneur-related economic development efforts.
- ❖ Source and amount of community match for technical assistance grants, up to \$15,000.

What is Business Coaching?



This Business Coaching strategy is being used as an approach to economic development in communities both in and outside Nebraska – David City, Garden County, McCook and Ord; Brookfield, Missouri and Sedan, Kansas.

The importance of Business Coaching comes from the fact that 99% of job creation in the United States results from either the growth of existing businesses or the start up of new enterprises (U.S. Small Business Administration, 2003).

Business coaching is a demonstrated program that focuses on identifying a community's entrepreneurial talent – those operating existing businesses with the potential for growth and those who are ready to start and grow a new business.

Coaching helps to connect this talent with the resources needed to expand and create economic activity for a community. Most importantly, business coaching efforts can be targeted to achieve various community economic development goals such as creating jobs, transitioning businesses to new ownership, diversifying the economic base of a community, and expanding the local tax base.

Business Coaching builds on a community's assets and works to advance a community's development goals; it's not a one size fits all approach.

NEBRASKA EDGE PROGRAM AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES ROLLING OUT NEW WEBSITE IN NOVEMBER

NxBizSuccess, or NBS for short, is a new website for people involved and interested in Nebraska's entrepreneurial and small business community. The site is a collaborative effort of Community Development Resources and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's NebraskaEDGE Program.



NxBizSuccess is intended to be:

- ❖ A place for people to share expertise and ideas with other business owners.
- ❖ A place to find interactive tools and resources to help businesses.
- ❖ A place to discover resources and events available across the state.

It is being described as “a conversation and a friend.” It will take the planning from the kitchen table and move it online where hundreds of friends can provide suggestions to help business grow, whether it's located in Paxton or Omaha. Knowledge is power and **NxBizSuccess** will bring that knowledge to the entrepreneur.



resources to business owners and prospective entrepreneurs.

The website will serve up a treasure trove of information designed to help bring ideas and

The site will offer:

- ❖ **Podcasts or videostreaming** of more than 50 videos so that you can learn from other business owners, professionals, and resource providers.
- ❖ **Membership list** that will allow you to join as a member, share your comments, and find a colleague.
- ❖ **Events across Nebraska** calendar that will make it easy to find out what is happening across the state for small businesses.
- ❖ **Statewide resource listing** that will allow you to search the list and add your organization to the directory.
- ❖ **Discussion blogs and forums** that will bring your questions, thoughts, and comments online and allow you to pose a question and wait for the responses to flow in.
- ❖ **Research, articles, and tools** including content areas such as Nu2Biz, NowInBiz, and MoneyTools.
- ❖ **Networking with social media** at your fingertips through Facebook, Linked-in, Twitter, Vimeo, and YouTube.

Are you excited yet? You should be! This site promises to be a wonderful location for all things related to the Nebraska small business community.

So, when does it officially become accessible? November 2nd is the target for flinging open the doors to this wonderful portal of knowledge. So, yet another thing to be thankful for in November!

BECOME AN ENTREPRENEUR WORKSHOP COMING TO CCC-HASTINGS IN JANUARY



Central Community College-Hastings campus will be offering an 8-week entrepreneurship workshop starting January 21, 2009. The title is “Become an Entrepreneur, Starting and Developing Your Small Business.” Topics will range from turning an idea into a business, basic business foundation, capital and

financials, marketing strategies, tax and legal issues, customer service and relationships, business plan and QuickBooks. Sessions can be taken individually or as a whole for college-credit. To register contact Lisa Tschauner, Central Community College, Hastings Campus, 402.984.4260.

CENTER FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND STUDENTS IN FREE ENTERPRISE OFFER MENTORSHIPS

Knowing how to succeed, where to find resources, and how to network are all key skills in personal and professional development. How we achieve these goals and ambitions is usually done with guidance from others.

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a mentor is a trusted counselor or guide. A mentorship program in conjunction with the Nebraska Center for Entrepreneurship (NCE) and Students in Free Enterprise (SIFE) has the objective of partnering students with business professionals and organization leaders in order to provide a focused learning environment for all.

Mentorship Program

Students are responsible for securing their own mentorship. However, the Nebraska Center for Entrepreneurship will help the student connect with business professionals, and will also help guide the student to the needed resources in order to approach these individuals. When a mentorship is secured, an agreement will be signed, which will clearly define the responsibilities of each party.

Mentorship Roundtables Event

To jump start the process, the Nebraska Center for Entrepreneurship will be hosting an event to bring possible mentors and interested students together.

Mentorship Roundtables

Network with business professionals

October 26th, City Campus Union
5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. followed by open networking

NO COST. REGISTER ONLINE TO SECURE YOUR SPOT!
entrepreneurship.unl.edu

The first annual Mentorship Roundtables event will be held in the UNL City Union on October 26, 2009. Forty roundtables, each seating eight, will be set up with a business professional seated at each table.

Students will have an opportunity to look over the resume of the professional, as well as an overview of their business prior to the event, via the Center for Entrepreneurship web site.



During four 25-minute timed rounds, students will have the opportunity to meet these business leaders and learn about the individual as well as the company. Students who are interested in a possible mentor relationship will be able to leave a copy of their resume.

The business professional may choose to contact and interview students to discuss a possible mentorship relationship.

Responsibilities of a Mentor

The main responsibilities of a mentor are to provide knowledge, experience, and advice, while helping a student become well-rounded. Mentors are asked to agree to specific guidelines, including:

- ❖ Maintaining monthly contact with the mentee (e-mail, phone, in-person)
- ❖ Providing advice and resources
- ❖ Demonstrating ethical decision making
- ❖ Sharing experiences and knowledge
- ❖ Providing constructive feedback
- ❖ Working with the mentee to set goals, time commitments, roles, and responsibilities
- ❖ Having the mentee's best interest in mind
- ❖ Completing a survey and evaluation forms from the Nebraska Center for Entrepreneurship

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA CALLS FOR NOMINATIONS FOR TWO ENTREPRENEURIAL AWARDS



The University of Nebraska is inviting applications for

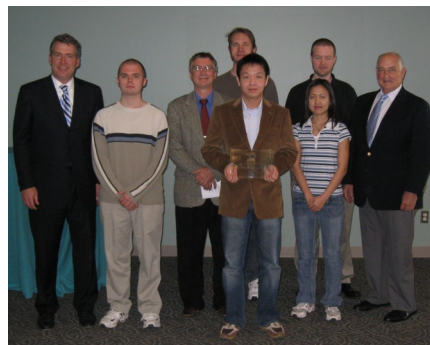
two entrepreneurial awards programs. For students, there is the Peter Kiewit Student Entrepreneurial Award, and for existing businesses the Walter Scott Entrepreneurial Business Award is available.

Peter Kiewit Student Entrepreneurial Award

This award is designed to recognize University of Nebraska students who have directed their energies, ideas, and talents toward community and business improvements with the creative and innovative use of information technology. This award, accompanied by a cash prize of \$2,500, will be given annually by the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska to a University of Nebraska student or to a team of students enrolled in a degree program during the entrepreneurial activities.

Walter Scott Entrepreneurial Business Award

This award is designed to encourage existing businesses with a presence in Nebraska to create partnerships and links with the University of Nebraska in the area of technology. The award will be given



University of Nebraska President James B. Milliken (left) and Walter Scott (right) recognize members of the GC Image LLC, recipients of the 2009 Walter Scott award.

annually by the Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska. The award winner will receive \$10,000 to be used for the promotion and / or creation of multiple student work experiences in the fields of

information science, technology, and engineering.

Nominations and Applications

Nominations must be received by November 16, 2009. Applications must be submitted by January 11, 2010.

Application and nomination forms may be obtained from the University of Nebraska website www.nebraska.edu/news/news_awards.shtml or by contacting Jeanne Holdren, Office of the Provost, University of Nebraska at 402.472.5242 or at awards@nebraska.edu.

NBDC OFFERS BUSINESS PLAN WRITING WORKSHOP

The Nebraska Business Development Center is offering an inexpensive workshop on "Hands-On Business Plan Writing" on October 23, 2009, at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln from 8:00-9:30 a.m.

Topics in this workshop:

- ❖ Why it is important to have a business plan
- ❖ Elements of a complete business plan
- ❖ How to start writing a business plan
- ❖ Resources and tools to develop a business plan
- ❖ Presenting your business

WHERE: University of Nebraska - Lincoln Nebraska Union (14th and 'R' Street). The room number will be posted in the lobby.

WHEN: October 23th, 2009

TIME: 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

REGISTRATION: Starts at 7:45 a.m.

COST: \$10 fee (Cash or check at the door)

Register online at:

<http://nbdc.ecenterdirect.com/ConfSignup.asp?ConferenceID=5564>.

GROW NEBRASKA OFFERS MARKETING WORKSHOPS ACROSS THE STATE

Don't Miss Out! Mark Your Calendar

GROW Nebraska is offering Marketing Workshops throughout the state this fall. The workshops, titled *Enhance Your Online Marketing Strategy*, are a great opportunity to learn more about marketing your business online.



Reaching your target market and customer base today has become more challenging! There are so many ways to reach your target market with all the online applications and tools available today - Facebook, Delicious, YouTube, Flickr, Twitter, Friendfeed to just name a few!

As part of your online presence learn how to enhance your chances of effective customer communication with search engine optimization and incorporate these online tools into your marketing strategy. It's all about making sure your web site is search engine and customer friendly.

They cost \$10 each and are open to both members and

non-members of GROW Nebraska. If you are interested in attending one of these workshops, please sign up at <https://www.growneb.com/store/forms/workshops.php>.

Dates, Times and Locations

- October 28 - Fremont - 9-12 at First State Bank and Trust
- October 28 - Omaha - 3-6 at New Development Corporation
- October 29 - Nebraska City 9-12 at Kimmel Research and Education Center
- November 17 - Valentine - 9-12 at Niobrara Lodge
- November 17 - Bassett - 3-6 at North Central Nebraska RC&D
- November 18 - Norfolk - 9-12 at Northeast Community College
- January 26 - North Platte - 3-6 at West Central Research and Extension Center - **NEW!**
- January 27 - Chadron - 3-6 at Chadron State College Student Center
- January 28 - Scottsbluff - 8:30-11:30 at UNL Panhandle Research and Extension Center
- January 29 - Sidney- 9-12 at Western Nebraska Community College - Room 112

FROM RECIPE TO REALITY

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln Food Processing Center offers a one-day seminar for all individuals interested in exploring the idea of starting a food manufacturing business.

The one-day *From Recipe to Reality* seminar is the first step in developing a food business. It is specifically designed to provide entrepreneurs with an understanding of the key issues they will need to consider when starting a food business.

Participants include individuals interested in marketing a family recipe, individuals with a product idea or concept, producers considering adding value to an

agricultural product, restaurateurs exploring the manufacturing of a house specialty, and storeowners contemplating the development of a private label products.

From Recipe to Reality provides a general overview of the many issues involved in developing a food manufacturing business. Seminar dates in 2010 are:

- ☒ Monday, January 11
- ☒ Saturday, April 10
- ☒ Friday, June 4
- ☒ Friday, August 20
- ☒ Saturday, October 23



MAKE PLANS TO ATTEND THE REGION'S FIRST-EVER MIDWEST FRANCHISE SEMINAR



Get into Business for Yourself, Not by Yourself is the theme for a comprehensive seminar coming to Omaha in November. The seminar is offering franchise education, resources and networking opportunities with franchisors seeking to provide business opportunities.

When: November 12, 2009

When: Marcus Theatre at Midtown Crossing 3201 Farnam St., Omaha

What: Day long franchise education and networking opportunity

Who should attend? Anyone interested in franchise business opportunities, services and resources. Whether you want to start a business, have a business but want to learn more, or want to attract franchisees to your community, the Midwest Franchise Seminar is for you!

You'll hear from franchise business experts including executives of leading brands including Dunkin' Donuts, Supercuts, Maid-Rite and Home Instead, just to name a few. Breakout sessions will cover how to get started, the financials of franchise operations, legal aspects of franchising, panel discussions with franchisees and franchisors and much more!

The cost for this information-packed event is just \$100. The price includes daylong education and networking opportunities, continental breakfast, lunch and admission to the trade fair and reception.

Franchise opportunities start as low as \$25,000. Financing sources will be available at the event.

Register online today and get more information at OmahaChamber.org/Franchise. To exhibit, complete the exhibitor registration form and return to Megan Blazek at mblazek@SelectGreaterOmaha.com or fax to 402.778.4618.

The agenda is action-packed with abundant opportunities to network and to learn more about franchising in the Midwest.

8-9 a.m.	Registration and Networking
9-9:15 a.m.	Welcome and Greeting
9:15-10 a.m.	Getting To Know the Basics: What is franchising and what are the advantages and disadvantages
10-10:45 a.m.	Legal Aspects of Franchising: What I need to know before signing on the dotted line and what should I consider before buying a franchise?
10:45-11 a.m.	Break
11-11:45 a.m.	Roundtable Discussion: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly of Franchising
12:00-1:15 p.m.	Lunch—Greg Cutchall, Cutchall Management Company
1:15-1:30 p.m.	Break
1:30-2:15 p.m.	Roundtable Discussion: What Franchisors Are Seeking
2:15-3 p.m.	Finance and Technical Assistance—Show Me How to Get the Money: Programs and assistance from specific franchisors as well as local, state and federal agencies, bank, finance company and Small Business Administration programs specifically for franchises
3-6 p.m.	Trade Fair and Reception Franchisors, brokers and others with goods, services and/or communities to promote can set up table-top booths to discuss topics one-on-one with the attendees and answer questions.

COUNTDOWN TO KEYSTONE OPENING BEGINS

Sidewalk superintendents: Your time has arrived!

After nearly six months of gritty and grimy demolition work, the Keystone Business Center is surging forward with renovation of McCook's tallest and most renowned commercial building.

Now, at last, construction watchers can sit back and take notice as the \$4.2 million renovation project turns the historic six-story hotel into a many-faceted business center.



For the public, the first outward sign of the project's progress came when the building's 164 decaying window frames began being replaced with white aluminum frames. The effect was immediate, giving the red brick edifice a sense of newness, much like people feel when they get their teeth professionally brightened.

The project has been a long time coming...and it still has a long ways to go. But at least now the countdown can begin. Starting with Monday, Oct. 5, 2009, a total of 299 days remain until the projected occupancy of the building. Soon thereafter there will be a Grand Reopening, with major political dignitaries invited to join the McCook Economic Development members in bestowing a new purpose on a structure which came very close to being blasted into smithereens.

The change started taking shape four years ago when Matt Stebbins, the manager of 21st Century Systems Inc., started looking for a place for 21 CSI to expand.

He and Rex Nelson, the executive director of the McCook Economic Development office, were touring the town when Stebbins saw the Keystone and started thinking. "Is there any possibility that could be the place?" he wondered. That little seed, planted in a site tour of the town by a potential anchor tenant, set off a chain of events which -- even before



completion -- has become a model for downtown renewal in rural America.

Somehow, despite skepticism and opposition, Nelson and the Economic Development Board pulled off what seemed like an impossible task: they secured commitments of \$4.2 million and embarked on massive restoration of a building which once served as the most prestigious gathering place in Southwest Nebraska.

Unfortunately, the Keystone's days of glory did not last nearly as long as McCook's visionaries in the 'Teens and '20s had hoped. Opened in 1922 following a three-year construction project, the hotel was hit by the Depression and dirt storms in the '30s, the war in the '40s and motel developments in the '50s.

By the early '60s the Keystone was on its last legs as a hotel, finally resorting to retirement living rooms to survive. First came the Defenders of the Christian Faith, then the subsequent McCook Townhouse.

Eventually, as the huge building aged and deteriorated, even retirement rooms became unfeasible. Dale and Joan Stewart tried to rescue the mammoth Main Street building, but investors did not materialize as hoped and the Stewarts had no choice but to focus their attention on their principal enterprise: the Chief Motel and Restaurant.

It was a tough row to hoe for the Stewarts. The Keystone was a dead horse, and -- eventually -- their only hope for sale of the Keystone was the efforts of the McCook Economic Development team.

There were many doubts and disappointments along the way but, to almost everyone's surprise, the EDC pulled it off. \$4.2 million is a heckuva lot of money, especially in a town of 8,000 in the middle of America.

The turning point in the drive to raise that much money came when the Economic Development Administration of the U. S. Department of Commerce awarded McCook, through MEDC, a grant of more than \$2 million to help renovate the aging, but still soundly based structure.



(Continued on page 11)

COUNTDOWN TO KEYSTONE OPENING BEGINS

That was only a start. Even with that money, the project still probably would not have happened if the sales tax for economic development had not passed in McCook. Members of the McCook City Council voted to join the Keystone renovation project, pledging \$1.2 million in sales tax funds to push the effort to the go-ahead stage.



Rex Nelson of MEDC,
Mary Kathryn Alspach
and Shirley Marshal of
E c o n o m i c
D e v e l o p m e n t
Administration (EDA).

Even then, one last link remained. The project needed bank loan funds and they were forthcoming. AmFirst Bank, First Central Bank, McCook National Bank and Wells Fargo, all McCook-based financial institutions, stepped forward to provide a \$750,000 loan to complete the multi-million dollar financing package.

Even after that, support continued. It came in the form of a \$76,400 grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Designed to

benefit the Entrepreneur Development Center, the funding will be used for furniture, computers and audio-visual equipment.

21 CSI, a developer of software applications for military and corporate purposes, remains the flagship enterprise for the Keystone project. The company came to McCook as the result of a 2003 chat between two airline travelers: U.S. Sen. Ben Nelson and Jeff Hicks, Chief Executive Officer of 21 CSI. Upon hearing that the young company was looking for a place to expand, Sen. Nelson suggested McCook, his hometown, and Hicks liked the idea. A call to Jerda Garey, then McCook's mayor, paved the way for 21 CSI's operation in McCook. To get operations going

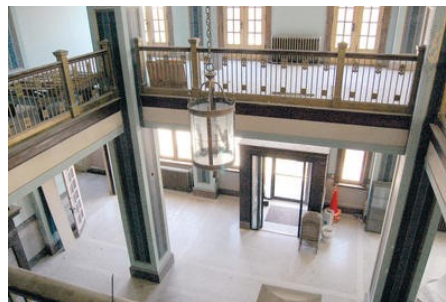
21 *CSI, a developer of software applications for military and corporate purposes, remains the flagship enterprise of the Keystone project.*

here, 21 CSI started in a second floor room of Walsh-Brady Hall at McCook Community College.

Limited because of space, 21st Century Systems has held staff levels at 8 to 10 people, but that will likely change when the firm occupies the entire fourth floor of the Keystone, said Larry Jackson, deputy chief of corporate development for 21 CSI. "We have hopes to grow to 30 employees within three years," he said.

Evidence of 21 CSI's expansion appeared on the front page of the Gazette's Oct. 2-4 Weekend Edition. In a story headlined, "Software company plans expansion," readers learned that the company plans to add a data center in the basement of the Keystone Business Center. This will include two more enterprises: satellite imagery processing and a storage business unit. A Community Development Block Grant -- of up to a half million dollars -- has been applied for. Half of the grant will be in the form of a forgivable loan; the other half will be a low interest loan. The McCook City Council has endorsed 21 CSI's application and have selected Miller & Associates of McCook as the administrator.

21 CSI is only one dimension of the Keystone project. The immense building, with more than 50,000 square feet of floor space on the seven levels (six floors plus the basement), will have multiple purposes. Floor by floor, the completed Keystone will serve these uses:



GROUND
FLOOR
LEVEL—

This is the
level which
will most
magnificently
preserve the
h i s t o r i c

excellence of the Keystone Hotel. The towering, decorated columns have been restored to their original grandeur. Throughout the first floor, Keystone guests will experience the thrill of being in a historic place, walking on original terrazzo, looking up at Roaring 20's era chandeliers and observing the ambience of strong stone pillars.

(Continued on page 12)

COUNTDOWN TO KEYSTONE OPENING BEGINS

(Continued from page 11)

The surroundings will embrace the spacious lobby and the memory-inspiring banquet and ballroom, as well as the corner office -- reserved as the downtown hub for the Chamber of Commerce -- and the room on the north, being readied for a return to use as a coffee shop and lunchroom.

THE MEZZANINE—The historic integrity of the original structure will also be apparent in the mezzanine area, with columns, flooring and chandeliers preserved for posterity. This area will house executive offices and a spacious, functional conference room.



THIRD FLOOR—All the walls of the hotel rooms, tiny by today's standards, have been demolished,

leaving a wide-open area for the Entrepreneurship Center. The idea, which is a hot button for economic development efforts, offers a place for people with business ideas to start and grow their businesses. It's an idea which has been tried in many towns around, including Holbrook, and economic development advocates here are determined to make this a shining showplace for small firm growth. The front part of the third floor is where the McCook Economic Development Corp. will have its offices. "It will be so much more efficient and convenient than our current office space," said Rex Nelson, the person -- more than any other -- who has spearheaded the Keystone project.

FOURTH FLOOR—The interior walls of this floor have been obliterated too. The reason is that the business center has dedicated the entire floor for use by 21st Century Systems, Inc. Compared to 21 CSI's corner room at the college, the area is spacious, encompassing more than 5,000 square feet of usable space. Even so, the anchor tenant may fill the room in short order.

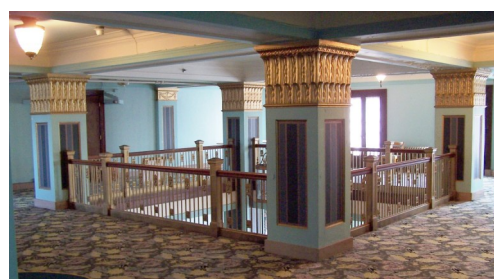
FIFTH FLOOR—Because of 21 CSI's growth potential, the Keystone Business Center developers are withholding a final decision on use of the fifth

floor. It is the same size and has the same layout as the fourth floor. If not used for expansion by 21 CSI, the floor could become a ready site for industrial prospects to occupy.

SIXTH FLOOR—Penthouse anyone? Who would have thought such an opportunity would ever come to pass in McCook, Nebraska, but it just may. The top floor of the Keystone gives an eagle's eye view of McCook, making it a provocative alternative for a few selected individuals, couples or small family units. "We've had interest," Nelson said. "With 6,200 feet of space, we would have the option of two spacious, three sizable or four convenient living units."

Linking all the floors together will be a brand new elevator, crafted and installed by the O'Keefe Co. The elevator will occupy the original shaft and will extend from the basement to the penthouse level. Other than the 21 CSI Data Center, only minor repairs will be made in the basement level of the Keystone, but the 9,500 square feet of space on the bottom level offers immense possibilities for the future.

Knowing, as we do, how fast time goes by, we will be amazed by how quickly the next ten months will come and go. As the days pass, one by one, the anticipation will build and ideas for additional uses of the Keystone will come to the fore.



Through it all, one of the most enriching things about the project will be the historical

authenticity of preserving a fabulous piece of McCook's past. The outside brick walls; the Norris Avenue balcony overlook; and the stone urns on the roof will remain as they were 87 years ago.

That's history...and it's happening still in McCook, Nebraska, U. S.A.

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Targeted Teaching Topic



ENTREPRENEURIAL LITERACY EMPOWERS EVERYONE

If you haven't started planning activities to celebrate the fourth annual National Entrepreneurship Week, February 20-27, 2010, now is the time to set the wheels in motion.



The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education is once again the leader of this annual event in cooperation with a host of partnering organizations. The Nebraska Department of Education and the Nebraska Entrepreneurship Task Force (NET-Force) are leading Nebraska's E-Week activities. This year's theme is "Entrepreneurial Literacy Empowers Everyone" and is linked to the 21st Century Skills initiative.

What is Entrepreneurial Literacy?



Entrepreneurial Literacy means having some basic knowledge of how a business is created and managed. It is the starting point for real experiences that test your knowledge and skills and motivate the entrepreneurial spirit in each of us. Real entrepreneurial skills come from experience. Literacy is the starting point to enable you to learn from your experiences.

Recognizing Entrepreneurial Literacy

This year, the Consortium and its member organizations want to recognize ENTREPRENEURIAL LITERACY as a real American necessity, whether you work for someone else or start your own business. These are the skills that empower everyone to succeed in any type of job in any industry and fuel the American economy.

Twenty Questions and Your Genius Certificate

In order to prompt discussion about the importance of entrepreneurship and to enhance understanding of entrepreneurship skills and knowledge, a "Genius Certificate" has been created. Teachers, students, parents, entrepreneurs are invited to test their knowledge by reflecting on the answers to 20 questions about entrepreneurship.



Entrepreneurship educators are encouraged to use these 20 questions in many different ways to spark meaningful conversations. There is no single answer for any of them; rather an opportunity to really give some thought to the question. Answers will be different depending on the situation and in fact will change over time.

The 20 Questions for All Americans, GENIUS Certificate, and suggested activities are available on the Consortium website and included with this issue's Targeted Teaching Activity.

Engage your school and community in celebrating National Entrepreneurship Week and it's sure to pay benefits. To help publicize your activities, send them to Gregg Christensen, Nebraska's contact person for National Entrepreneurship Week, at gregg.christensen@nebraska.gov. They'll be posted on the National Entrepreneurship Week state calendar page and the Nebraska Entrepreneurship Education website Calendar of Events.

ENTREPRENEURIAL LITERACY EMPOWERS EVERYONE!

Help Celebrate National Entrepreneurship Week February 20-27



The Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education has announced that the theme for the 2010 National Entrepreneurship Week is “Entrepreneurial Literacy Empowers Everyone!”

This will be the fourth annual recognition of American entrepreneurs and the student programs that encourage our future entrepreneurs. Nebraska has been a leading state in the celebration of this unique event.

A newly released website for National Entrepreneurship Week is now accessible at www.nationaleweek.org. State activities will be

prominently featured through the interactive national map on the home page. E-Week is the perfect opportunity to draw attention to the importance of entrepreneurship education and the great programs available across Nebraska and the United States.



In keeping with the entrepreneurial literacy theme, a “Genius Certificate” for teachers, students, parents, and entrepreneurs has been created. A set of 20 questions focusing on entrepreneurship has been developed along with a host of ideas for how these questions can be used to prompt greater understanding of how vital entrepreneurship is to our nation and the global economy.

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For timely information on topics related to entrepreneurship and entrepreneurship education (K-20) at the local, state, regional, national and international levels and to share information with others, sign up for the Nebraska Entrepreneurship Education Listserv log on to:
<http://lists.k12.ne.us/mailman/listinfo/entre-ed>



Skills for Lifelong Learning, Earning, and Living